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Report of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women on the activities of the United Nations trust fund in support of actions to eliminate violence against women

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit herewith, to the Commission on the Status of Women and the Human Rights Council, the report of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women on the activities of the United Nations trust fund in support of actions to eliminate violence against women, which was prepared in compliance with General Assembly resolution 50/166.

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I. Overview

1. The United Nations trust fund in support of actions to eliminate violence against women is a global, multilateral grant-making mechanism that supports efforts to prevent and end violence against women and girls. It was established in 1996 by the General Assembly, in its resolution 50/166, and is administered by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) on behalf of the United Nations system. With the strong institutional support of UN-Women and its regional, multi-country and country offices, and working closely with the rest of the United Nations system through its inter-agency Programme Advisory Committee,[1] the trust fund plays a vital role in driving forward collective efforts to prevent and eliminate violence against women and girls.

2. The present report, prepared for the sixty-second session of the Commission on the Status of Women and the thirty-eighth session of the Human Rights Council, describes the impact and achievements of the trust fund in 2017.

3. The trust fund raises and distributes funds to support multi-year programmes to address, prevent and ultimately end violence against women and girls in three priority areas: improving access for women and girls to essential, safe and adequate multisectoral services; furthering implementation of legislation, policies, national action plans and accountability systems; and promoting the prevention of violence against women and girls. It does so through its three strategic directions: supporting results-oriented approaches to prevent and end violence against women and girls; catalysing learning from global evidence collected from grantees; and leveraging its unique mandate and convening power to advocate for and foster sustainable financing.

4. Raising the profile of effective measures to prevent and end violence against women and girls in order to secure continued and increased funding remains at the core of the trust fund's efforts. The list of trust fund donors has grown and diversified over the years and, while countering the causes and addressing the consequences of violence against women remains seriously underfunded, the trust fund has brought increasing attention to the need for resources and the enormous and sustained impact that grantees can and do have on the lives of women and girls, often with relatively modest investment.

5. As of December 2017, the Governments of Australia, Austria, Ireland, Israel, Liechtenstein, the Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland, Trinidad and Tobago, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America had contributed to the trust fund's twenty-first grant-making cycle. Support was also received from the UN-Women National Committees of Japan, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America.

[1] In 2017, Programme Advisory Committee members at the global level included: the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment and the World Health Organization. Other experts at the global level, including representatives from the Centre for Women's Global Leadership, Equality Now and the Sexual Violence Research Initiative, were also actively involved in the grant-making process.

6. In 2017, the trust fund managed 120 projects aimed at preventing and addressing violence against women and girls in 80 countries and territories.[2] At least 340,830 women and girls benefited directly from services for survivors, empowerment activities and protection from violence during the year, among whom were 15,950 women survivors of violence. A total of 6,362,155 people, including men and boys, government officials and the general public, were reached by supported projects during the year. In 2017, the trust fund sought in particular to reach women and girls from marginalized and underserved communities and groups who face particular challenges because of discrimination, poverty or isolation in rural or remote settings. Among the direct beneficiaries, for example, were at least 37,550 women and girls living with disabilities, 10,640 lesbian, bisexual and transgender women and 8,880 indigenous women. An analysis of trust fund projects showed that the cost of reaching beneficiaries in 2017 was $2.7 per beneficiary, in line with the figure from 2016, illustrating the great impact of often small investments.

II. Introduction

7. The global movement for human rights and women's empowerment has achieved much in recent decades. Nevertheless, violence against women and girls remains prevalent, persistent and devastating. It is recognized as a major obstacle to the fulfilment of the human rights of women and girls and to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. As many as 70 per cent of women worldwide have experienced intimate partner physical and or sexual violence in their lifetimes.[3] At least 200 million girls and women alive today have undergone some form of female genital mutilation cutting in the 30 countries where the practice is most prevalent; in the majority of cases girls were cut before the age of five.[4] More than 750 million women alive today were married before their eighteenth birthday and about 250 million entered into union before the age of 15.[5] The scale of gender-based violence against women and girls underscores the urgency of properly resourcing effective measures to end it.

8. The deeply entrenched nature of gender-based violence affecting all generations, nationalities and communities was recently highlighted by the high-profile revelations of widespread sexual harassment and violence starting in the

[2] Afghanistan, Albania, Antigua and Barbuda, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belize, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cameroon, Chile, China, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gambia, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Liberia, Libya, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mexico, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Myanmar, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Republic of the Congo, Republic of Moldova, Rwanda, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Viet Nam, Zambia and Zimbabwe, and State of Palestine.

[3] World Health Organization, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and South African Medical Research Council, *Global and regional estimates of violence against women: prevalence and health effects of intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence* (Geneva, World Health Organization, 2013).

[4] United Nations Children's Fund, *Female genital mutilation/cutting: a global concern* (New York, 2016).

[5] United Nations Children's Fund, *Ending child marriage: progress and prospects* (New York, 2014).

entertainment industry and swiftly encompassing a host of diverse sectors. The initial focus on people in the public eye became a truly global phenomenon as people drew courage from each other and spoke out about their experiences. The debate increasingly focused on the all-pervading, constant, everyday reality of a continuum of violence faced by so many women and girls around the world. More than 1 million people tweeted using the hashtag #MeToo, sharing personal stories of sexual harassment or assault in an act of virtual solidarity. This online outcry gave voice to acts that are traditionally shrouded in silence and neutralized by convention, exposing the web of intimidation that protects abusers and the cruel privilege of impunity. It was one of many expressions of women's activism in 2017 that, in different contexts and languages, sent the message: sexual harassment and gender-based violence, whether at work, in the home or in public spaces, are not acceptable and must not be ignored, and that each individual must take action in this regard, without delay. It is in this context that trust fund grantees around the world continue to work on a daily basis to challenge impunity, to empower survivors and to further attitudinal change in order to prevent all forms of violence against women and girls.

9. In 2016, the total funding requested in response to the trust fund's Call for Proposals was more than $677 million, a testament to the existence of a wealth of innovative and transformational civil society projects that could make a real impact on gender-based violence in many different settings around the world. A key challenge for the trust fund, therefore, is to find ways to enable this momentum to translate into projects fostering sustainable change.

A. Building sustainability

10. Of 21 small grants assigned in the eighteenth and nineteenth cycles (2014 and 2015, respectively), 14 (two thirds) were assigned to organizations that identified themselves as women's non-governmental organizations. This represents a significant increase in comparison to earlier cycles and shows that opening the small grants modality has improved the trust fund's outreach to women's rights organizations. As of the twentieth call for proposals (2016), the trust fund has refined its outreach approach by stating explicitly what type of organizations are prioritized and what criteria would be applied; these include the size of organizations, whether they are women-led, their level of expertise as regards gender-based violence and their track record of implementing projects in the field on ending violence against women.

11. One of the consequences of the historically low level of funding allocated to initiatives to end and address violence against women, representing just 2 per cent of the total donations allocated to human rights funding,[*] has been the relative underdevelopment of the administrative and governance capacities of organizations, particularly smaller organizations, working on these issues. The trust fund is, therefore, prioritizing capacity-building for small organizations, with a particular focus on small women's organizations.

12. The trust fund recognizes the need for small women's organizations to ensure the sustainability of their core organizational functions so that they can define their own priorities in accomplishing their mission. The trust fund is responding to this

[*] A report by the Foundation Center on global human rights-related giving by private foundations found *23 per cent of donations being allocated to organizations* that work to advance women's rights, of which 9 per cent is assigned to initiatives to end violence against women. The Foundation Center, "Accelerating change for women and girls: the role of women's funds" (New York, 2009).

need by including, for the first time, a budget line for core funding to small women's organizations for a maximum of 7 per cent of direct activity costs. This core funding is separate from and in addition to the 7 per cent all organizations can currently request for indirect costs.

13. One measure of success and sustainability is the extent to which grantees are successful in obtaining new and additional funding, beyond the project supported by the trust fund. In 2017, 6 out of 9 small grant recipients who requested recommendations managed to mobilize additional funds from other donors. Among them was Alafia, a small women-led organization in Togo working to eradicate harmful traditional widowhood practices that increase the risk of HIV infection. Although a 2012 law grants widows the right to refuse such practices, they remain widespread, especially in rural areas. Since being awarded a grant by the trust fund, Alafia has gone on to obtain $25,000 from the African Women's Development Fund to encourage discussion among leaders of the Ewe community in order to explore possibilities for eradicating these practices. Alafia also obtained a second tranche of funding, totalling $24,306, from the United States Department of State through their Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund. This project focuses on eradicating harmful widowhood practices in Aneho communities in the south-east of the country.

14. Another grantee that has been able to secure further funding is the Women's Justice Initiative, the only organization in Guatemala working to prevent gender-based violence specifically in rural indigenous communities. A small trust fund grant enabled the organization to help overcome key obstacles that Mayan women face in accessing justice. In June 2017, the Women's Justice Initiative was awarded a grant by Hivos and in July 2017, the Initiative was given a one-year grant of $45,000 by Dining for Women, a global giving circle. Those two grants will support a number of activities that the Initiative has initiated with the trust fund's support.

15. Small organizations often play a crucial role in empowering women to demand that existing norms are put into practice. For example, the grantee Equality is implementing a project to promote justice for survivors of gender-based violence in China. Its particular focus is on empowering women and girl survivors of violence from marginalized and underserved communities, such as lesbian, bisexual and transgender women and women living with HIV/AIDS, to advocate for their rights and gain access to legal assistance and social services. Two new implementing regulations for the national domestic violence law passed during 2017 in Yunnan Province directly incorporated perspectives from project experts. The first requires police to flag situations with a high risk of domestic violence and thereby better mobilize resources for survivors. The second involves strengthening the protection order mechanism in the new Anti-Domestic Violence Law. In addition, Equality and its partners reached out to over 50 survivors of domestic violence to begin collecting data for future empirical studies that will be used as advocacy tools. Equality and its implementing partner also trained 82 government officials to improve their understanding of domestic violence and appropriate legal and police responses. In addition, in the first six months of 2017, Equality provided services for 61 people, an increase over the previous year.

16. In Serbia, the grantee Astra, working with a State institution, the Centre for Human Trafficking Victims' Protection, implemented a project to establish the referral procedures for victims of trafficking, many of whom are underage and from the Roma minority. In the first half of 2017, Astra received 2,106 calls, 75 per cent of which related to trafficking. Astra identified five new victims of human trafficking and 15 people at high risk of trafficking or some other form of violence, while

continuing to support victims identified in previous years. During 2017, over 110 different assistance interventions were provided to Astra clients, including assisting 30 people at risk of becoming victims of trafficking and supporting them during recovery. Almost all beneficiaries stated that the biggest change they experienced in terms of Astra work is that feel much safer because they know they are not alone and they get support when they need it the most. Astra also organized training for social welfare centres: 24 professionals from 12 centres participated in an accredited two-day training course entitled "Support to victims of human trafficking in the social protection system — identification, assessment and planning of the support". Most of the participants did not have any previous knowledge about human trafficking. In the period after the training, Astra consultants established 48 contacts with social welfare centres regarding potential victims of human trafficking.

17. A project implemented in Brazil by Casa da Mulher Trabalhadora sought to raise awareness among marginalized groups of young women in Rio de Janeiro on identifying violence, including technology-related violence, and how to address it. Three months after the training, which took place in March and April 2017, 94.4 per cent of young women who had participated had carried out some form of activity in their locality. The most common activities were participating in a workshop, either with other women or in mixed groups (55.6 per cent); distributing materials on women's rights (50 per cent); and conversations with family or friends on the issue (83.3 per cent). Through its "multiplication" approach, the project managed to reach 2,969 women and girls in schools and in public places. Evaluations from 76 participants found that 86 per cent felt the activity had increased their understanding of violence against women and 56 per cent were interested in taking further action.

B. Responding to humanitarian crises

18. In its twentieth funding cycle, the trust fund awarded $2.5 million through a newly established funding window to five organizations working to prevent and end violence against refugee and internally displaced women and girls. The two grantees operating under the humanitarian window in Jordan delayed the start dates of their projects, pending relevant approvals. Meanwhile, 2 of the 3 grantees working in Iraq, the Free Yezidi Foundation and ASUDA for Combating Violence against Women, reported challenges brought about by conflict in the region. Despite challenges in keeping staff in the increasingly unstable project area and the movement of local beneficiaries to safer areas, the projects did make headway prior to the conflict.

19. During the first six months of the project, the Free Yezidi Foundation operating in Duhok enrolled 288 women and girls in their trauma and mental health therapy sessions. It is estimated that another 800 community members have been reached by the project through social media outreach. The project has also trained three volunteers as paraprofessional psychological first aid workers, with a view to ensuring sustainability beyond the trust fund-supported project. Women participants reported that they used the skills and insights they had gained to help their relatives at home who have so far been unable to attend the sessions.

20. During the same period, the implementation of a second project began in Sulaymaniyah, Dahuk and Erbil, in which six female researchers were hired and trained by ASUDA for Combating Violence against Women in collecting evidence and monitoring sexual and gender-based violence experienced by female Syrian refugees. This phase was followed by consultations with camp administrators, service providers and local authorities on strengthening response mechanisms for Syrian

refugees, community awareness workshops and legal and psychosocial support for refugee girls who are vulnerable to sexual and gender-based violence.

21. The third grantee in Iraq, Women for Women International, enrolled 600 women and girls in social and economic empowerment training programmes during its first six months of implementation in Erbil and Sulaymaniyah. Thirty women have so far received social and legal services through the local partner organization, Warvin. Women for Women International is continuing to train and mentor Warvin so as to strengthen their organizational and technical capacity in providing protection services against gender-based violence.

C. Addressing the needs of women and girls living with disabilities

22. The 2017 call for proposals opened a window for at least $1 million in funding for projects on ending violence against women and girls with disabilities, in recognition of the fact that, while they experience many of the same forms of violence all women and girls experience, they also face particular risks. Women and girls with disabilities face a risk of rape that is almost three times greater than that faced by women and girls in general, and are twice as likely to be survivors of domestic violence and other forms of gender-based violence. They are also likely to experience abuse over a longer period and with more severe injuries than other women and to face particular obstacles in obtaining justice and redress for the violence experienced.[7]

23. Among those projects already supported focusing on women and girls with disabilities is a project implemented in Zimbabwe by the Leonard Cheshire Disability Trust. The Access to Justice project, which started in 2015, provides specialized services for girls and women with disabilities, including logistical support and sign-language classes in order to facilitate access to police units and the courts. To date, the project has directly supported 696 women and girls with disabilities. Additionally, 293 police officers, 203 Court officials and 81 representatives of mainstream women's organizations have been reached by the project. About 1,300 girls and women with disabilities, including their caregivers, and 290 community leaders were reached with information and other prevention activities at the community level.

24. The feedback from women and girls, caregivers and stakeholders confirms that the project has greatly empowered women and girls with disabilities who are utilizing the acquired knowledge and information to report acts of violence against women and girls in their communities. The community-based approach used provides safe spaces for girls and women with disabilities to seek information on violence against women and to discuss challenges and solutions. Through advocacy and national dialogues on access to justice for girls and women with disabilities, the project also contributed to the explicit recognition of their rights in the new national gender policy. The project also facilitated the adaptation of the policy into accessible formats, like Braille.

25. The Mental Disability Rights Initiative is implementing a project in Serbia to address violence against women with disabilities in custodial institutions. It has helped raise awareness of this issue for informed policymaking. For example, in June 2017, the grantee gathered the representatives of the Government of Serbia, members

[7] Stephanie Ortoleva and Hope Lewis, "Forgotten Sisters — A Report on Violence against Women with Disabilities: An Overview of Its Nature, Scope, Causes and Consequences", Northeastern Public Law and Theory Faculty Research Papers Series, No. 104 (Boston, Massachusetts, Northeastern University, 2012).

of Parliament, independent institutions, the Republican and Provincial Institutions for Social Protection and international organizations and presented findings of a study about various forms and manifestations of violence to which women with mental disabilities are exposed in custodial institutions, including the administration of contraceptives without informed consent, forced abortions, sterilization and sexual violence.

26. During the reporting period, 15 women with mental disabilities who have previously or are currently in custodial institutions were involved in training programmes held for 68 service providers. The women contributed important insights into their experiences and all participants assessed this approach as innovative, important and beneficial. The project has made a significant impact in several areas: making women's stories visible to the public, contributing to a change of practice in custodial institutions and framing custodial violence as an important topic in gender and disability policies.

III. Results and evidence

27. The trust fund's strategic plan, 2015-2020, calls for the creation of a results framework to translate the plan into measurable results. One of the key aspects of this is evaluating the results attributable to the organizations that have been awarded grants. This required the development of a core set of common, standardized indicators that grantees could apply and on which they could report. Following an earlier pilot, a new approach was tested in 2016 whereby the trust fund reviewed all progress reports against project-specific results frameworks and indicators, so as to identify those grantees measuring and reporting on the same or similar indicators. Building on this experience, a small set of standard, common indicators was developed in late 2017 to collect and aggregate data on similar results achieved across the portfolio of grantees. For example: 36 grantee organizations report that at least 10,540 women and girls were reached using specialist support services, including trauma counselling and shelters, as a result of trust fund projects in 2017.

28. An annual partner survey was conducted for the second time in 2017. 109 individuals from 61 organizations in the trust fund's active portfolio completed the survey in 2017. The increased visibility and publicity provided by the trust fund is a benefit cited, in that 52 per cent of respondents said that additional financing has been raised during the grant period, resulting in $6.5 million being raised in additional financing for the continuation or scaling-up of the project funded by the trust fund.

29. One of the ways in which the trust fund contributes to expanding the knowledge and evidence base on effective models to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls is a series of knowledge-exchange events. In early 2017, the trust fund was able to analyse in depth the results of the first of these events, held in October 2016 in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina. This brought together 16 organizations from 10 countries and territories in the Europe and Central Asia region involved in providing multisectoral services, who had received trust fund grants between 2007 and 2016.

30. Examples of the results identified by independent, external evaluators included two projects in Albania implemented by the non-governmental organization Refleksione (the Albanian network against gender violence and trafficking), between 2007 and 2012, which led to the establishment of a network of shelters and counselling centres for survivors and women at risk, the approval of the decree on the

establishment and functioning of a referral mechanism for the treatment of cases of domestic violence and the adoption of proposed amendments to legal codes. In Ukraine, a project implemented by the Foundation for Public Health from 2011 to 2014 focusing on HIV-positive and street-involved women and girls succeeded in establishing a referral system, including cooperation with law enforcement agencies and an information campaign to increase the number of clients reached by services. In Serbia, the non-governmental organization Fund B92 piloted a model for the economic empowerment of women survivors of gender violence and women from marginalized social groups within the context of a safe house in Sombor. The evaluation assessed the project as a success and one which should be replicated and tested further by centres for social welfare and civil society organizations, with modifications to adapt to the local context.

31. The main conclusions and recommendations reached through this participative process included how referral systems can form the basis for building more comprehensive coordination. The event also underscored how non-governmental organizations are in many cases leaders in creating and sustaining multisectoral coordination in service delivery at the local level, acting both as entry points for survivors seeking services and as providers of long-term support as rights advocates. Participants also stressed that governance and legislation play a crucial and multi-faceted role in creating, supporting and maintaining multisectoral coordination. For example, a former grantee from Croatia described how they brought cases before the European Court of Human Rights as a tactic to encourage the Government to achieve compliance with international standards.

32. During the year, the trust fund team conducted 32 monitoring missions to projects in 22 countries, six of which were to provide training and support to small organizations. The missions had varied areas of focus. For example, in August, the trust fund visited the Sindh Community Foundation, a non-governmental organization implementing a project to curb early marriage, in order to review financial reporting and documentation. The trust fund was able to verify that the grantee had made marked improvements in the area of financial management and documentation. It is also important to note that this was not achieved at the expense of their programme work; their progress in terms of completing project activities was on track and on schedule.

33. In April, the trust fund visited a project implemented by the Women's Support Centre in Armenia to prevent and combat domestic violence. Through interviews with the grantee, partners and beneficiaries, the trust fund was able to confirm that the project was using a human rights-based approach and had established a well-functioning network of service providers. The grantee had identified the need for further work to ensure proactive State involvement for a sustainable coordinated response mechanism.

34. In June, the trust fund visited a project in the district of Sonitpur, in the Indian state of Assam, where Pragya, a civil society organization, is working to address violence against women from ethnic minority tribal communities. As part of the visit, the trust fund team visited the village of Amloga village and met 35 women's peer group members. The project is supporting a kitchen garden seed distribution programme that has helped the village to grow essential vegetables, which are used both for their own consumption and to sell in local markets. Pragya is working with 100 women's peer groups and councils, which have over time become cohesive and vibrant and attracted new members. The grantee also continued to work with the 300 women leaders trained in providing counselling and psychosocial support so that they

could offer leadership and guidance to the peer groups to which they belong. These women leaders are regularly convening meetings, discussing issues around violence against women and solutions to engage the 2,757 members of the women's groups. The monitoring visit clearly indicated the scope in areas of convergence where the work of Pragya and the trust fund can reinforce each other, for example in obtaining access to relevant State machineries and using learnings from the project to inform future initiatives.

IV. Strategy-led results

35. The trust fund continues to channel its grant-giving in support of the key objectives set out in its strategic plan, 2015–2020, namely: supporting work on primary prevention of violence against women and girls; increasing and improving support services for survivors of violence; and strengthening the implementation of national laws, policies and action plans. The following sets out some of the key achievements and areas of progress by trust fund grantees in pursuit of the overarching aims.

36. In 2017, several projects supported by the trust fund were aimed at ensuring that national laws were enacted in line with international law and standards and that the guarantees promised were delivered in reality for women and girls. In Nepal, for example, grantee Restless Development Nepal, in partnership with local non-governmental organizations, implemented a project to abolish the harmful traditional practice of Chhaupadi, which involves isolating menstruating women and girls, thereby putting them at risk of other abuses. The practice has been banned by the Supreme Court and in August 2017 was made a criminal offence, with Restless Development Nepal among the organizations that were instrumental in getting the new law passed. More recently, the grantee has focused on institutional development among civil society organizations and capacity-building to implement the legislation and ultimately end Chhaupadi.

37. The project used youth-led peer-to-peer education to address such sensitive issues as sexual and reproductive health, as well as disseminating information on laws and policies. Youth group members have also taken initiatives to spread the message of "Six Sa (health, safety, hygiene, education, nutrition and support)" in the community. A mid-term review showed that all the women and girls who responded to a survey by Restless Development Nepal reported that they had attended school or work regularly during menstruation in the previous three months. This indicated an important change from the baseline survey, when almost 7 per cent of respondents reported skipping class during menstruation. In addition, 11,180 young women and girls gained knowledge about Chhaupadi, gender-based violence and other forms of discrimination through school sessions, door-to-door visits and awareness-raising sessions.

38. In Tunisia, Fondation CIDEAL, a development organization, is working to make the commitment to gender equality, including the elimination of violence against women, enshrined in the 2014 Constitution a reality. The trust fund-supported project is working to improve access to justice, health care and other vital services in the governorate of Kef, including through the Manara Centre, which is the only centre offering multisectoral services to women survivors of domestic violence in the north-west of the country. The Centre's legal department assists women in legal actions relating to violence, divorce, maintenance payments, childcare and housing subsidies.

During 2017, 99 women were assisted by the Centre's legal department and 19 cases were won.

A. Preventing violence against women and girls

39. Transforming attitudes, beliefs and behaviours is an essential part of making progress towards a world without violence. Trust fund grantees use a wide range of approaches to deliver results that demonstrate how interventions can alter customs, institutions and practices that normalize violence against women and girls.

40. In the United Republic of Tanzania, for example, Equality for Growth, a local women's organization, is working to bolster women's economic rights and reduce the risk of violence by creating safe environments, in six markets, in two districts of Dar es Salaam. Some 2,081 market traders (1,354 men and 727 women) from the six markets took part in the campaigns on the causes and impacts of gender-based violence, as well as on how to handle issues in the markets and how to report cases. In March and April 2017, Equality for Growth conducted several visits with journalists to the six markets. During the visits, interviewees said that the situation had improved, as compared to before the project. They credited such activities as awareness sessions on gender-based violence delivered in the market, the imposition of fines on perpetrators of violence and education sessions by paralegals and legal community supporters as having contributed to the reduction in violence against women. Cases of violence against women are reported to have dropped by a third.

41. Episcopal Relief and Development implemented a project that addresses gender-based violence in post-conflict Liberia through the engagement of interfaith, Christian and Muslim organizations in six districts of Grand Cape Mount and Rivercess. A midterm assessment showed that the percentage of faith leaders who reported publicly speaking out against violence against women and girls in the previous year had increased, from 27 per cent, at the start of the project, to 100 per cent. Some 8,300 members of churches and mosques were reached by their faith leaders and informed about how to access services. Faith leaders are increasingly challenging deeply rooted stigma by speaking out against practices that compromise or disadvantage women and girls and, importantly, are using the knowledge they acquired on the various forms of violence as guidance as they counsel families or refer cases to service providers.

B. Fostering the implementation of law and policy

42. The Azerbaijan Young Lawyers' Union set up a trust fund-supported project to provide women with free legal, medical and psychological support services, as well as refuge from violent partners and family members; the project set up the only shelter for survivors of violence currently operating in the country. The project was, in part, a response to the concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on Azerbaijan's fifth periodic report. The Committee called on Azerbaijan to ensure that women and girl victims of violence have access to immediate means of redress and protection, including a sufficient number of adequate shelters in all regions. During the reporting period, 203 survivors of domestic violence who came to the centre benefited from the rehabilitative, protection, legal and medical services provided. Moreover, 30 women were the beneficiaries of small grants, helping them towards financial autonomy, an important factor in eliminating domestic violence. So far, 17 businesses have been supported or established within project activities on empowering women and girls who have

experienced domestic violence. The businesses are small, varied and thriving. In addition, through a series of awareness-raising sessions, 680 boys and men have a better understanding of domestic violence, its negative consequences for the community and the available protection mechanisms, including the services offered by the shelter. The analysis of pre- and post-session evaluation questionnaires revealed a significant increase in the knowledge and awareness of the issues among the target groups.

43. The current three-year project implemented by the Victims Support Section of the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia builds on the achievements of an earlier trust fund-supported project to promote gender equality and improve access to justice for female survivors of gender-based violence under the Khmer Rouge regime in the 1970s. During 2017, 255 civil parties and victims of gender-based violence were logistically supported to participate in the court hearings and forums. The grantee is also working to assist in connecting implementers with sources of funding. For example, one of the 22 proposed reparations projects, the Pka Sla project, which is related to forced marriage under the Khmer Rouge, received approximately $500,000 towards its implementation, under the coordination of the Victims Support Section. The Victims Support Section interviewed approximately 80 civil parties about discrimination against survivors of forced marriage in their communities and found that the discrimination has decreased significantly, owing to a change in the social and economic situation in Cambodia and a growing understanding of and empathy towards survivors.

C. Funding projects that work to ensure access to multisectoral services

44. A project implemented by the Institute for Development and Community Health in Kien Xuong, Thai Binh Province, Viet Nam, focuses on intimate partner violence during pregnancy and lactation, an alarming and underaddressed global health issue. During the second year of the project, 1,282 women among the target group were reached by community health service officers, 153 calls were made to the hotline to request more counselling services on domestic violence and 2,748 women received counselling on intimate partner violence during home visits. Up to 50 per cent of women in the target group reported that after receiving services, they were better placed to identify different kinds of intimate partner violence and to make plans to protect themselves. Some 82 per cent of female clients reported that they were satisfied with the services offered. Advanced training on screening services for community health service workers and village health workers also enabled them to identify survivors of intimate partner violence in their day-to-day work.

45. A project implemented by the Chega! Ba Ita association addresses the repercussions of the pervasive sexual violence that characterized the Indonesian occupation of Timor-Leste (1975–1999). The project worked directly with groups of women survivors in all 13 districts of Timor-Leste and a national women's non-governmental organization to urge policymakers and parliamentarians to create and implement specific policies for women survivors of human rights violations, including implementing the recommendations of the Truth, Reception and Reconciliation Commission, which found that rape during the occupation was systematic and widespread, a crime against humanity.

46. In 2017, the project continued to develop its database on women survivors of past and recent violence, as well as on children born as a result of sexual violence. Currently the database contains 482 profiles, providing a sound basis for advocacy

and the production of policy recommendations. Three reports (on women survivors, on children born as a result of rape and on a national victims' trust) were published, or nearing publication, in English and Tetum. For part of the year, field research concentrated on children born out of sexual violence during the Indonesian occupation. Their accounts provide valuable information both on their mothers' situation and the recurring cross-generational experiences of marginalization and discrimination. The words of participants shed a very poignant light on the legacy of these human rights violations: "our hearts and heads hurt, because we think too much about the things people say, then our eyes become heavy with tears so the things about the past become a heavy load to carry but we remain strong in our hearts". These accounts are also unique in the sense that many were sharing their experiences for the very first time. An increasing number of women survivors expressed self-confidence in their ability to organize themselves and advocate for their rights. A similar process has started with the children of women survivors.

47. In Côte d'Ivoire, Children's Life in Rural Area is working to engage entire communities, including local leaders and teachers, in the development of community-based institutional mechanisms to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls and to eliminate discrimination against HIV-positive women. In the first six months of the year, the grantee reached 2,588 community members, including 50 male leaders, through its awareness-raising sessions on how to create a more secure environment for women in communities. Women whose spouses participated in the men's awareness-raising sessions noted an improvement in how their spouses behaved towards them.

48. The project, which is due to continue until the end of 2018, has already noted progress in key areas, attributed to intense awareness-raising sessions in the localities. No cases of female genital mutilation have been reported in the village since the beginning of 2017. In 7 of the 10 communities where the project is being implemented, youth groups have formed to be on the alert for risks of female genital mutilation. Community laws are in place and community action plans were drawn up, using participatory project design with local government cooperation, to discourage and address violence against women. Since the implementation of the plans, a marked reduction in the levels of both physical and emotional violence against women have been reported. All 10 communities have developed and implemented action plans that include reparations for mental abuse and have increasingly refused to accept out-of-court settlements in sexual violence cases and have strengthened community-based provisions to further protect women and girls.

49. A project implemented by the Asamblea de Cooperación por la Paz in El Salvador, a country with the highest rate of femicides in the world, is working to improve institutional responses to violence against women and girls and to enhance oversight and advocacy skills among local women's and youth organizations. In the three municipalities where the project was implemented, 359 women have taken part in initiatives to improve their leadership skills in relation to the exercise of the right to live free of violence. In addition, 511 women survivors of violence have received support, in line with agreed protocols. At least 130 people, including members of the general public and decision makers, took part in the presentation of an audiobook on violence against women and women's human rights. At least eight media outlets have broadcast the 24 episodes of the audiobook, reaching at least 20,000 people. Three local networks have been formed that are continuing the work of training, capacity-building and engaging with State institutions to ensure effective coordination of efforts to end and address violence.

D. Advocating for and ensuring the human rights of all women and girls

50. Projects supported by the trust fund are reaching out to communities and individuals around the world, including underserved women and girls, who are often at increased risk of violence not only because of their gender, but also because of factors such as their ethnicity, sexual orientation or disability. The trust fund continues to work under the umbrella of the 2030 Agenda to further the aim of leaving no one behind.

51. In Egypt, the Al-Shehab Institution for Promotion and Comprehensive Development implemented a project, working with women and girl survivors of violence, women domestic workers, female sex workers and women living with HIV in the marginalized informal communities of Izbat al-Hajjanah and Al Marj in Cairo. The organization established a community service centre as part of efforts to improve access to essential services for survivors of violence, such as legal and psychosocial support. Between January and June 2017, the project provided a comprehensive package of services for 211 women and girls. The project continued to support female domestic workers within the targeted communities and conducted in-depth individual discussions with these workers, in order to identify the problems they encounter in their everyday lives and explore potential solutions. Of the 18 female domestic workers directly supported, 7 accessed psychological support and 5 benefited from legal support, 2 accessed voluntary counselling and testing for blood-borne diseases and 5 were referred to other service providers, some to access income-generating activities to enable them to improve their economic situation, addressing one of the structural causes of their vulnerability to violence and abuse. The project enabled a total of 1,427 women and girls from the target group to access services in order to improve their well-being and safety.

52. Socio-legal kiosks empowerment centres set up by the Al-Shehab Institution in 10 districts, in 2016, have seen the number of visitors and callers contacting the helplines more than double in 2017, compared with the previous year. Survivors of domestic violence and of violence in the community have been approaching the centres to get guidance and have their cases documented. They reported high levels of reassurance while interacting with those providing care and valued the support received, which helped them present their cases confidently in front of police officials and other relevant authorities.

53. The Rainbow Sky Association of Thailand implemented a three-year project in four regions to empower lesbian and transgender women and build their human rights and advocacy capacity both within their communities and with relevant government agencies. The National Social Welfare Act 2012 recognizes sexual diversity, but implementation of the Act has been partial and the national AIDS strategy does not fully address the needs of transgender and lesbian women. In the first half of 2017, the Association reached 16,063 people through various interventions, including capacity-building workshops, hotline and online services, community health centres and outreach services.

54. As part of the three-year project, the Association's Monitoring and Evaluation Unit followed up with the 113 trained participants, three and six months after the training. The comments elicited gave a clear indication of how the project has helped to change lives for the better. In the words of a 29-year-old transgender woman in Bangkok: "I have more confidence and the courage to stand up for myself when my rights are violated. I am proud of myself and I understand others better". Many

indicated their increased knowledge of and confidence in addressing violence, stigma, discrimination and human rights violations based on sexual orientation and gender identity. The online and hotline services, which provide assistance when violence occurs, were operational and connected to the committee of judges on gender-based violence cases of the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security. Many people indicated their increased capacity to seek assistance when violence occurs. One concrete result concerned a case in the southern province of Yala, where four lesbian women, together with a grantee community leader, went to the police to report an incident of sexual abuse. The Association supported the complainants throughout the court proceedings.

55. In Nicaragua, the women's organization MADRE is working with a long-standing partner, the local indigenous women's organization Wangki Tangni, to reduce violence against indigenous women and girls in 63 Miskito communities. The women targeted by the project live in remote communities on Nicaragua's North Atlantic coast, so it can be almost impossible for them to access shelters or local resources. The aim of the project is to advocate for the effective implementation of Nicaragua's Law 779, on addressing violence against women and girls, in these communities and to carry out capacity-building with local stakeholders to prevent violence and make the customary justice system work to protect women and girls. Women have reported that they are seeing a decrease in violence within their homes and communities as a result of their increased knowledge of their rights and the laws that protect those rights. The project has trained 30 women in broadcasting and reporting and distributed 400 solar-powered radios to make sure everyone can tune in to radio programmes, the only ones broadcast in Miskito, that reach 115 communities, six days a week. They report that men who are participating in this project and who are listening to the Wangki Tangni radio broadcasts are more supportive of women's rights and have become less violent. Women have shared that they feel confident to stand up for their rights as a result of the workshops and radio broadcasts. Each of the 42 communities within the seven territories has made commitments to develop and implement cultural events and create groups within their communities.

V. The way ahead

56. In many ways, 2017 was a year of increased awareness regarding gender-based and sexual violence threats worldwide and the need to take further action globally to move the issue out of the shadows, into the spotlight. It is a result of the long-standing efforts to unveil the prevalence of violence against women and girls that takes many forms and affects people in every walk of life and in every part of the globe. It has become clear that the abuses revealed in the public arena had been known about or suspected for years and, in some cases, decades.

57. For many around the world, the #MeToo phenomenon was a watershed moment. Certainly for the millions of victims who spoke out, as well as those who either chose not to or felt they could not, it was an important moment of solidarity across countries, continents and cultures. It has re-energized those who insist that violence against women and girls is not acceptable and can be stopped. That assertion is the starting point for the work of the trust fund. The achievements of grantees take the next step by showing how this can be achieved.

58. Focusing on results and sustainability, grantees around the world are finding and implementing solutions and contributing to our overall understanding of effective strategies to counter all forms of violence against women and girls. They are often

doing so with a relatively modest investment of funds. Trust fund evaluations have shown that two key factors are central to successful initiatives: collaboration and local grass-roots involvement in developing projects. The emphasis on funding projects rooted in local communities, coupled with the capacity-building provided to grantees by the trust fund, have contributed substantially to their overall impact and sustainability. The trust fund will continue to strengthen its support for small women's organizations and to explore the potential of small grants. The emphasis on sustainability and impact is also leading the trust fund to consider longer-term grant periods in recognition of the time needed to bring about attitudinal change.

59. The trust fund is keenly aware of its unique role and continues to explore new ways of expanding its collaboration with donors and partners to provide the necessary resources for the creative projects put forward each year. It will also look to explore ways of contributing its expertise to wider initiatives, such as the joint United Nations and the European Union Spotlight Initiative on combating all forms of violence against women and girls, which was launched in September 2017 and is a welcome step forward in continuing efforts to ensure that efforts to address violence against women and girls attract the resources needed.

60. Gender-based and sexual violence and the way they distort and restrict the life chances of women and girls around the world have received intense global attention in 2017. The challenge for all those working to change this reality is to translate this awareness into effective, sustainable change and, as the present report has shown, not only are grantees rising to that challenge, they are increasingly shaping the response and signalling how their initiatives can be scaled up and strengthened to move confidently towards a future free from violence for women and girls everywhere. The trust fund will continue to support the increasing confidence and mobilization of groups working for a future free of violence against women and girls everywhere.